

THE Christian Messenger.

NO. 16.

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VOL. I.

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another, as I have loved you—JOHN xxiii. 34.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

NO. XV.

"Omnia explorate; bonum tenete."—PAULUS.

HAVING carefully examined the concluding remarks of T. on the pre-existence of Christ, I can sincerely say of him, as he has said of me and others, I think him "honestly mistaken!"

1. In regard to *the form of God*, I shall only add here, that negative proof, though it may have some weight in certain cases, is, after all, not very conclusive. Supposing it had not been said, that Jesus was in *the form of God*, which, but for this single expression of the apostle, would have been the fact, would he on that account have been any less in this *divine form*? And although it is not said that the prophets and apostles were in *the form of God*; does it necessarily follow that they were not? Why were they not, as well as that prophet, who was like unto Moses? and of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write?

2. If it be argued, that since we are not "acquainted with any evidence of its being true, that he (Christ) ever divested or emptied himself of any power which he possessed, from his birth till his death," so it must be concluded that he emptied himself of this power before his birth; why might it not be argued with as much propriety, that since we have no evidence of his emptying himself of this power before his birth, so he must have done it whilst he was here upon earth? For ought I can see, this argument would be, to say the least, full as conclusive. There is no evidence, but that the power of working miracles was as discretionary with Jesus, as the power of doing any thing else: for even if previous prayer were sometimes necessary, yet as the Father always heard him, and he could at all times pray, why was it not discretionary

with him, whether he would pray or not? See Matt. xxvi. 53. John xi. 44.

Did Christ say, "I can of my own self do nothing?" he also said, "No man can come unto me, except the Father which sent me draw him." Why then had he not all the power to work miracles, which believers have to come to Christ?

T. objects to the translation in the Improved Version, of 2 Cor. viii. 9. "*while he was rich, yet for your sakes he lived in poverty*;" and says we might as well read, John ix. 25. "*When I was blind, then I saw*." Here I must inform T. that he is certainly incorrect. By what rule of grammar can he render *αἶψα*, *βλεπω*, then *I saw*? does he not perceive, that the verb is in the present tense? and will he say that the word used by the apostle, *πτωχεις*, is also in the present tense? But this only gives us another instance how far a man's zeal will carry him in supporting a *darling tenet*!

It is admitted that the verb in the first member of the sentence, *ει*, is alike in both passages, which I should render *being*—*that being blind I now see—that being rich, for your sakes he was poor*. Now this is most unfortunate for T. for according to this testimony, if the passage in Corinthians contain any proof that Jesus was RICH, before he came in the flesh, the one in John will prove, that the man was BLIND before he came in the flesh! But this seems to be straining points a little too far.

As T. only quoted a part of the note in the Improved Version, and left out those parts which are directly against him, and against the truth of which he has said nothing, I shall take the liberty to give the whole note as it stands.

"While he was rich—see Wakefield—*πλεσιος ει, πτωχεις*. The construction requires it to be understood, not of a passage from a preceding state of wealth to a succeeding state of poverty,

but of two contemporary states. He was rich and poor at the same time—*πτωχεις*, 'pauper fuit, sive potius, mendicavit', Erasmus. The word properly signifies an actual state, not a change of state. Literally *he was poor*, or *he was a beggar*. Our Lord was rich in miraculous powers, which he could employ if he pleased to his own advantage. But for the benefit of his followers, he chose to lead a life of poverty and dependence, to deny himself the comforts and luxuries of life for the good of others." (That is, as I understand it, to set an example for others, not to live poor, that others might live in luxury!) "This was a very proper example to the Corinthians, which they might feel and imitate. It was certainly much more pertinent and applicable, than a supposed descent from a prior state of existence and felicity, to which there could be nothing analogous in the case of the Corinthians, and to which the apostle cannot in reason nor in consistence with grammatical construction be understood, as making the least allusion."

The reader is now requested to compare this note with the part quoted by T. p. 57. together with his comments thereon, and then draw his own conclusion.

I will propose the following, as a literal translation of the passage in question; and submit it to the learned whether it does not convey all the force and meaning of the apostle as well as any translation which has been given. *For ye know the favour of our Lord Jesus Christ, since for you he was poor, being rich, that through that poverty ye might be rich*. I do not propose this as the best translation which could be given, but only as being more literal, and at the same time conveying fully the sense and meaning of the apostle.

On the whole; if we were to attend more to the plain truths of the scriptures, and leave the visionary schemes of fana-

ticism, which seem to be of no great consequence whether they be considered true or false, to those who can please themselves by feasting on such chimerical notions, as the one under consideration appears to me to be, I am inclined to think we shall be doing a more acceptable service, both in the view of God and man. R. C.

—O—
FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

No. III.

ALL scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

For unto which of the angels said he at any time, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee!" And again, "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son!"

And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, "And let all the angels of God worship him."

And of the angels he saith, "Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire."

But unto the Son, he saith, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom."

"Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

And, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the works of thine hands."

"They shall perish; but thou re-

mainest: and they all shall wax old as doth a garment;"

"And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail."

One in a certain place testified, saying, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him! or the son of man, that thou visitest him!"

"Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands:"

"Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet." For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

For both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,

Saying, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee."

And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again, "Behold, I, and the children which God hath given me."

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

And deliver them, who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage.

For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.

Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren; that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;

Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house.

For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house, hath more honour than the house.

For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God.

And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after;

But Christ as a Son over his own house, whose house are we, if we hold the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

For we have not an High Priest, which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Christ glorified not himself to be made an High Priest; but he that said unto him, "Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee."

As he saith also in another place, "Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec."

Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard, in that he feared;

Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience, by the things which he suffered;

And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

Called of God an High Priest, after the order of Melchisedec.

Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

For every one that useth milk, is

unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

ARELI.

—O—
FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

Answer to Z.

BEING a subscriber to the Christian Messenger, I receive and read with pleasure, the different communications; not that all the pieces accord with my views; but I am pleased to see those, whose views I think mistaken, honestly come forward and state what they think correct, with the intention of doing good.

Among others, a writer under the signature of Z. with that view, has brought forward the subject of *Predestination*, in a sweeping proposition, which forms a part of the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterians and Baptists, and perhaps some other denominations, as follows, viz. "God hath decreed in himself from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably, all things whatsoever come to pass."

This he considers as infusing comfort and consolation into the mind of *erring man*. I think there must be some mistake here; for if the proposition is true, in the broad sense in which it is expressed, no man can possibly *err*, he can only do what is perfectly according to the will of God, and which God has absolutely decreed he shall do. What is according to the will of God, cannot be wrong; it must be perfectly right, and cannot be an error. I conceive that the will of God is the standard of perfection, but if the above proposition be true, there can then be no occasion for any laws; for men cannot possibly do wrong. What could be the use of the command, *thou shalt have no other Gods before me*, if God not only knew that the people would disobey that law, which he certainly did; but *freely and unchangeably*, and of course, *absolutely decreed that they should disobey it*? The same is the case with every other command of God, whether positive or negative. How any man can possibly be criminal or guilty by any thing he can say or do, contrary to any command of God, if that proposition be true, I confess I do not understand. Any dis-

tinction between good and evil actions must be nugatory, if all actions are fore-ordained of God, and agreeable to his will, they must be equally acceptable to him. I can readily conceive that all the works which God does, are done by him according to the counsel of his own will, and must be perfectly right. But I have not yet seen any evidence of its being true, that every thing that men do, is according to the most wise and holy counsel of the will of God. It is true, indeed, that the Supreme Ruler frequently controls the effects of the evil actions of men, and makes them subservient to his gracious and benevolent purposes. Thus he controlled the effects of the malicious wickedness of the sons of Jacob in selling Joseph into Egypt, and made these effects subservient to his gracious designs.

Mr. Z. observes, that "if sin terminate in good, its cause must be good, for a bad cause cannot produce a good effect. If it was not intended by Jehovah, it never could have been, and God would never have permitted it unless for good." This, to be sure, is consistent with the proposition; but it appears to me to be only consistently wrong; though I do not believe that Z. meant to be wrong. Sin, which is the transgression of the law, I apprehend, is radically evil, and incapable of being made good by any power of God or man. The effects of evil actions, as I have stated, may be made subservient to the benevolent purposes of God. Lust, (which is a bad cause,) when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin; (which is bad fruit) and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death, (the effect of sin) James i. 15. Death, which is the effect of sin, may and will be productive of good, which the sinner did not intend, but God intended the good, to which the effects are subservient. Sin is radically evil, and can only be done away by being pardoned. Sin was never intended by Jehovah; nor did God ever permit it. He knew that it would take place, through the perverseness of the human heart, and he provided means to bring the sinner to repentance, that he might receive pardon. God never permits wickedness; he permits only what is in itself lawful, when it is not only lawful but also expedient. He suffers wickedness to be till the sinner repents, but till then, the punishment is ready to fall on the sin-

ner; there is no punishment for those things which he permits, for there is no crime. *Permission* and *suffering* a thing to be done, are often confounded as synonymous terms, which is by no means the case; this leads men into gross mistakes. They are never confounded with one another in the scriptures. He suffered the manners of the Israelites. Acts xiii. 18. He suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Acts xiv. 16. Winked at the conduct of nations, Acts xvii. 30. No obedience can be acceptable to him but what is voluntary. 1 Cor. xvi. 7. Paul says, I trust to tarry a while with you, *if God permit*. Heb. vi. 3. This will we do, *if God permit*. Paul was permitted to speak for himself. Acts xxvi. 1. It is not permitted to women to speak in the church. 1 Cor. xvi. 34. It is understood in common life. It is lawful for a merchant to import goods into the United States, it is lawful for him to have the goods brought ashore, but he is not permitted to have them till the duties are paid or secured, because till then it is not expedient.

Z. has referred to Acts iv. 27. but perhaps was not aware that it was not the best possible translation; there is a very great transposition of the words in that verse, the very first word in the Greek being transposed, so as to form the very last of the verse in the English. It has been rendered: *Gathered together truly were Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done*. Z. may take his choice of the versions. One thing is very certain, viz. that this conspiracy had no intention to do the will of God. They did it with wicked intentions and in ignorance of the prophecies which they fulfilled in condemning him. They became his betrayers and murderers. Our blessed Lord, who well knew that their wickedness could not be done away without their repentance, and obtaining pardon, prayed for them: *Father, forgive them, they know not what they do*. God had commanded Jesus to lay down his life. John x. 17, 18. He delivered his Son into their hands, well knowing that their malice and wickedness would lead them to put him to death. But that God absolutely decreed them to be wicked, or that any man should be wicked, I do not believe.

(Concluded in our next Number.)

POETS' CORNER.

MY foes declare with awful frown,
The Lord my soul will thunder down,
To dark and long despair!
My sins they say can't be forgiven,
I've preached so much the love of heaven,
I ne'er shall enter there!

I own the charge—will not deny—
I've laid my worldly pleasures by,
Devoted up my time;
To preach my Saviour's boundless love
To all mankind; that they may prove
His mercy all divine.

Deception! heresy! they cry;
The fraud is of the blackest dye;
Should Christ love sinners? No!
He loves his saints, and such are we;
But sinners all must banished be,
To vengeance, wrath, and wo.

That I'm a sinner, Lord! I own;
But thou in mercy gave thy Son,
For wretches, such as me;
And since I knew thy mercy, Lord,
I have to sinners preach'd thy word,
That they might taste and see.

If Christ for sinners feels no love,
What sent him from the realms above,
To die for sinful men?
If Jesus felt no love for me,
Till I his boundless love did see,
How did that love begin?

Lord, judge between my foes and me,
Give us discerning eyes to see,
And understand thy grace;
If there be mercy still in store
For sinners, then reveal thy power,
Unveil thy lovely face.

FROM THE UNIVERSALIST MAGAZINE.

"Ye shall not surely die"—Genesis iii. 4.

LETTER TO A CLERGYMAN.

REV. SIR,—This letter will contain some objections to a part of the Sermon you delivered last Sabbath. The objections you will not consider as obtrusive, while you remember the peculiar circumstances of the occasion which gave rise to them. That you should have publicly designated the denomination of Universalists by name, and then indulged yourself in a declamation calculated to excite some bitterness against them, is, to say the least, rather singular, if you were not, at the same time, willing they should have the privilege of being vindicated directly to you, in some public manner, when a proper season should arrive.

In your discourse, you said with considerable earnestness, that universal salvation was the very doctrine, which the serpent preached to Eve in the garden of Eden. You repeated and

reiterated the idea, in almost every form, from a direct charge against Universalism, to a solemn warning to your hearers to beware of it. You told them that the advocates of that doctrine preached like the serpent of old, "Ye shall not surely die."

I was sorry to observe so much personality and invective in this part of your sermon. They were such as nothing could justify, except the most plain and incontrovertible proof that the accused were guilty of the alleged impiety. Of such proof, I am bold to assert, you had none. That you could not have had any, will soon be shown: that you recollected none, of any sort, at that time, was pretty evident from the fact of your not attempting to produce any. Your *ipse dixit* was all the authority we were favoured with, for that odious charge against a respectable body of professed christians.

I think, after all, that I might venture to leave the truth or falsehood of your charge to your own decision. The matter is so plain, that even an interested judge would not find it convenient to decide improperly. Do you, then, believe, sir, that this is what the serpent taught Eve, viz. *That Jesus Christ should at length restore all men from their sin, misery and death, and make them happy in the enjoyment of their Creator?* This, you will not deny, is the distinguishing tenet of Universalism, yet neither in Genesis, nor in all the Bible, have we one intimation that he taught her the doctrine of salvation by Jesus Christ, under any form whatever. His words naturally implied that her transgression should not bring her into a state needing salvation; "Ye shall not surely die." I am astonished at your boldness in making so unfounded a charge. What would you think of a class of men who should infuriate the public mind with the belief that you and your Calvinistic brethren, preach just as the serpent did of old, "Ye shall not surely die"?

(Concluded in our next Number.)

CHARITY is to be considered as it has relation to the affections and to the actions. In the affections, it is a sincere kindness, which disposes us to wish all good to others, in all their capacities, in the same manner, as justice obliges us to wish no hurt to any man in any respect.

Our readers are informed, that the Christian Messenger is now in the hands of those, who will spare no reasonable pains to keep it alive; and the editor pledges himself, that nothing shall be wanting on his part to render it as useful and instructive, as its narrow limits will permit. It being so very small, however, it must not be expected that every communication can be admitted; and therefore, out of the many which are and may be presented, a judicious selection is desirable, and in this we shall at all times be governed by the sincere motives of doing good. No piece will be rejected on account of sentiment, provided the author appears to understand his subject, and writes from a conviction that it is not only true, but that its promulgation will be useful in the world.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

THE communication of J. J. is excluded, for the same reasons which he says, he did not expect his first piece to appear in print. Whether he did or did not write the words "For the Christian Messenger," is not material: that these words were in it when presented to R. C. is certain, but whether in the hand writing of J. J. or not, he cannot possibly say, as the communication is not preserved.

C. C. must excuse us, for thinking that his communications are too mystical for the Christian Messenger. The writer, no doubt, means well, and his productions might perhaps be edifying to some readers.

Several other communications are rejected, not containing any thing sufficiently important for the public.—Others are under examination, and will probably appear in due time.

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